

WYCOMBE LIVE TO FIGHT AGAIN

Sports Mail Special Report

WITH skipper Paul Bates back in the side after a bout of 'flu Wycombe Wanderers were at full strength for their F.A. Cup first-round tie, but they could only draw against Bedford Town, Cup giant-killers of last season.

Wycombe: Maskell; Beck, Roy-stone; Baker, Rundale, Gale; Worley, Samuels, Bates, Horseman, Merrick. Sub: Thompson.

Bedford: Collier; Morgan, Skin; Willis, Collings, Corbett; Sturrock, Paton, Fogg, Cooley, Benning. Sub: Cleary.

Referee: M. Sinclair (Guilford).

More than a thousand fans from Bedford swelled the Loakes Park crowd to the biggest of the season, nearly 8,000, for a game which gave early indications of a tough clash.

The Wycombe forwards were creating plenty of openings, but shooting was often erratic in face of Bedford's close marking and quick tackling.

Bedford attacked less frequently, but marksmanship was more accurate and Maskell had to make several full-length dives to save, notably from Benning and Sturrock, who were active on the wings.

Then Bates broke away for Wycombe, but was beaten for possession by the goalkeeper, and at the other end Sturrock hit the side netting with a powerful drive.

Half-time: Wycombe Wanderers 0, Bedford Town 0.

Under floodlights in the second half, Wycombe again set the pace at the start and Gale sent one tremendous shot just over the bar.

Worley was prominent with several purposeful runs and Horseman was brought down before he could get in his shot after another desperate effort.

Wycombe were well on top at this stage and several corners had the Bedford defence in real trouble. But goalkeeper Collier was there.

It was against the run of play when Bedford took the lead with a brisk counter-attack in the 67th minute. FOGG scrambled the ball past Maskell from a centre by Sturrock.

Wycombe tried desperately to retrieve the position but over-eagerness marred their efforts in front of goal.

But in the 85th minute another all-out Wycombe attack brought an equaliser from SAMUELS from a pass by Merrick.

The replay is at Bedford on Wednesday.

Result: Wycombe 1, Bedford 1.

WYCOMBE HIT LATE SAVER

by PETER GILL

Wycombe W. 1 Bedford 1

A DRAMATIC goal five minutes from the end in a storming climax earned Wycombe Wanderers a replay in their F.A. Cup first round clash with Southern League side Bedford Town. The teams will meet again at Bedford next Wednesday.

It was certainly no more than they deserved in a rip-roaring game at top speed that produced plenty of thrills for the crowd of 7,500.

For the Isthmian League side, playing with tremendous spirit, and showing better combination between halves and forwards, often had the professionals defending desperately in the tearaway goalless first half and they had rather the better of exchanges in the second half.

Wycombe looked to be wearing the testing pace better than the professionals in the second-half, as right-winger Worley created a succession of openings which brought smart saves from the busy Collier.

It was against the run of play when Bedford, hitting back desperately, took the lead in the 67th minute as Fogg seized on a cross from Sturrock and scrambled the ball past Maskell.

Then a furious Wycombe rally produced a succession of thrills with the visitors' goal under siege until, five minutes before the end, inside right Samuels converted a centre by Merrick for Wycombe's equaliser.

WYCOMBE 1, BEDFORD 1

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE amateurs Wycombe almost gave famed giant-killers Bedford a dose of their own Cup medicine.

Battling Wycombe, sparked by wingers Len Worley and Les Merrick, were on top most of the first half. Then a great Merrick shot cannoned off the bar eight minutes after the interval.

Incredibly, Wycombe were a goal down in 66 minutes through Ron Fogg. Five minutes from time, Keith Samuels headed in a Merrick cross to give Wycombe a deserved draw.